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# CITIZEN AIRMAN

Volume 73 No. 5

October 2021



## Out of Kabul

Reserve supports massive  
Afghanistan evacuation operation



*Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve*



## PURPOSE

“

I have concluded that we were put on this earth for a purpose. That purpose is to make it, within our capabilities, a better place in which to live.

- General James "Jimmy" Doolittle

”

Heroes of the Air Force Reserve:

Like many of you, I watched events unfold in Afghanistan with a flood of emotions. I thought back to Iraq, when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device hit our gate on my third day in country. I thought about the scale of human tragedy for the Afghan people.

My heart broke for each of the families of our fellow service members who were wounded or did not return. What made the pain all the more acute was the purpose of their mission. They stood with our most vulnerable allies in the face of those who were willing to kill indiscriminately. I cannot think of a more clear contrast between our values and the ideologies of our adversaries.

My single greatest comfort during these events was watching Reserve Citizen Airmen across the world volunteer to go into harm's way to protect innocent people. You showed the world we are a ready and accessible force, able to deliver combat power anywhere on the planet with minimal notice in the most hostile conditions.

During the first 24 hours of Operation Allies Refuge, we generated 13 ready aircrews to assist with the evacuation. Within 72 hours, the number grew to 80 crews and 36 aircraft. In August alone, Reserve Citizen Airmen supported a total of 37 evacuation missions out of Kabul.

Our medical personnel once again demonstrated exceptional skill, some delivering babies for their first time

while in flight and overcoming language barriers. Our maintenance, aerial port and logistics personnel worked countless hours to ensure surge operations ran safely and smoothly. Because of your professionalism in this heroic effort, thousands of vulnerable people were safely evacuated.

I recognize each of us will process these events differently depending on our experiences. As we collectively sort through complex emotions, I ask you to reach out to one another. Additionally, our first sergeants, chaplains and mental health providers are trained and ready to help you find the resources you need to navigate these issues.

More than three quarters of you entered military service after 9/11, volunteering to serve during a series of conflicts around the world. You brought with you the same sense of purpose that has motivated generations of Reserve Citizen Airmen to serve. You reassured our allies and partners by providing overwatch and mobility. Because of your efforts, countless people downrange were able to return home to their families. You also brought combat power to bear on our enemies, denying safe havens for our adversaries and disrupting the networks of those who wanted to harm Americans.

Over the last two decades, you have maintained exceptional readiness levels, always prepared to respond to any contingency even during ongoing combat operations. As we prepare for great power competition, readiness remains our top

priority. Currently, COVID-19 is the single greatest threat to our continued readiness.

Like a human adversary, the virus has adapted, with new mutations increasing its transmissibility and lethality. We have the ability to disrupt it in our families and our communities. As we continue to combat the pandemic, I urge you to stay informed on both individual medical readiness requirements and comply with additional preventive measures. Our command's Vaccine Operational Planning Team is dedicated to ensuring your command teams are equipped with both the vaccination supplies and information to protect our Airmen.

Thank you for everything you have given in service to our great Nation. The Command Chief and I are proud to serve with each of you. ■

**RICHARD W. SCOBEE**  
Lieutenant General, USAF  
Chief of Air Force Reserve  
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command



## PERSPECTIVE IS EVERYTHING

“

The greatest tragedy for any human being is going through their entire life believing the only perspective that matters is their own.

- Doug Baldwin

”

This past month has been difficult – very difficult. As I write this, we recently learned of the 13 deaths in Afghanistan, the Delta variant is running rampant, we just got hit by Hurricane Ida, and homes are still being destroyed by the fires on the West Coast.

I was actually supposed to write about a completely different topic this month, but I couldn't bring myself to ignore the current state of our world. The intent of this article isn't to bring upon more doom and gloom, but rather share my perspective and how it changed within a matter of days.

When we first began our withdrawal from Afghanistan, many service men and women and American citizens were dealing with a lot of emotions: anger, sadness, betrayal and guilt, just to name a few. I kind of understood why they felt that way, but I couldn't 100% empathize. While I deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, I never deployed to Afghanistan so my initial perspective was that we needed to reduce our footprint in the region in order to shift our focus toward the emerging threat of Russia and China.

It wasn't until I had a conversation with the boss, Lt. Gen. Scobee, who shared his experience during one of his many combat deployments, that I started to understand a little more. As the commander during one deployment, his job was to protect all individuals on the base at all costs.

Unfortunately, the price of battle meant he had to send several fallen Americans back home to devastated families. As he recounted his story, he was visibly choked up. I could tell this weighed heavily on him. This opened my eyes to a different perspective.

I was down at AFRC headquarters when I learned of the attack on the Kabul Airport. A day or two later, I learned one of the 13 Americans killed in the attack, Cpl. Hunter Lopez, was the son of two of my coworkers back home. This made the situation very real and my heart ached for the Lopez family, along with other families who lost loved ones during the attack. Again, my perspective changed.

I recently read the viral, social media post written by Sergeant Mallory Harrison, Sergeant Nicole Gee's roommate, friend

and co-worker. Sergeant Gee was killed in the Kabul attack. She explained how her generation of Marines have been told war stories by Iraq/Afghan vets, but never understood their perspective because they never deployed to that area of responsibility or even fought in a war. Unfortunately, it hit home when her roommate and best friend lost her life trying to save and evacuate so many others. I think that post helped people understand her and many others' perspective a little more.

I share this to illustrate how important it is to talk about what you are going through and feeling, not only because it will help you with your situation, but also because it helps others understand a different perspective. People only know, experience and see the world through their own lens. It's not malicious, it's not on purpose, it's just human nature. We can only get better by listening to other perspectives, sharing yours and hopefully getting one step closer to seeing another point of view.

We are dealing with a lot right now. COVID, natural disasters, illness, financial struggles, you name it...but we are resilient. Regardless of rank or position, how you treat and interact with people can and does make a difference. Please take the time to listen, be kind, courteous and forgiving as you go about your day, because you never know what someone else may be going through. Perspective is everything.

As always, it's an honor and privilege serving as your command chief. Please share your perspective with me at [afrc.ccc@us.af.mil](mailto:afrc.ccc@us.af.mil). ■

**TIMOTHY C. WHITE JR.**  
Chief Master Sergeant, USAF  
Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of Air Force Reserve  
Command Chief Master Sergeant, Air Force Reserve Command



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Afghan evacuees debark a C-17 Globemaster III assigned to the Air Force Reserve's 911th Airlift Wing, Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania, at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, as part of Operation Allies Refuge. For more on the Air Force Reserve's role in this historic airlift operation, see the story on page 6. (Airman 1st Class Kylie Barrow)



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Staff Sgt. Alyssa Raines, a Defender with the 442nd Security Forces Squadron at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, and student at the Integrated Defense Leadership Course, scans her surroundings for opposing forces during a static defense exercise at Camp James A. Garfield Joint Military Training Center, Ohio. The IDLC was designed to provide Reserve security forces Airmen with intensely focused hands-on training to achieve and maintain combat readiness. (Eric M. White)

## CITIZEN AIRMAN

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*Afghan evacuees board a C-17 Globemaster III at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait, Aug. 24, after leaving Afghanistan. (Staff Sgt. Ryan Brooks)*

# Out of Kabul

## Air Force Reserve supports massive Afghanistan evacuation operation

From Staff Reports



*A Security Forces Raven maintains a security cordon around a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft in support of the Afghanistan evacuation at Hamid Karzai International Airport. (Master Sgt. Donald R. Allen)*

Reserve Citizen Airmen from across the country played a huge role in one of the largest air evacuations of civilians in American history, supporting the rapid evacuation of thousands of people from Afghanistan in August as part of Operation Allies Refuge.

After Kabul fell to the Taliban on Aug. 15, the Defense Department rushed to get American citizens, Afghans with special immigrant visa applications in process and other vulnerable Afghans out of the country before the end of the month.

More than 70 Reserve aircrews and hundreds of maintenance, security, medical and support personnel were activated to help ensure the safe passage of Americans and Afghan allies from

Kabul to locations around the globe.

In many cases, Reserve Airmen blended into Total Force crews, mixing active duty, Guard and Reserve.

“The United States is the only nation capable of rapidly deploying forces to provide nonstop airlift operations at this scale,” said Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee, AFRC commander and chief of the Air Force Reserve. “It would not be possible without the support of our Total Force – active, Guard and Reserve Citizen Airmen – seamlessly integrating to execute the mission.

“Once again, our Air Force Reservists proudly answered our nation’s call, responding in less than 24 hours. I’m overwhelmed with pride as all of our service men and women took care of Americans, our allies and vulnerable Afghans.”

Among the Reserve units that contributed to the evacuation operations were: the 315th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina; the 445th AW, Wright-Patterson Air Force

Base, Ohio; the 908th AW, Maxwell AFB, Alabama; the 349th Air Mobility Wing, Travis AFB, California; the 911th AW, Pittsburgh Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania; the 452nd AMW, March Air Reserve Base, California, the 446th AW, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, the 512th AW, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, and more.

An example of a Reserve unit’s participation, the 446th AW deployed aircrews, aeromedical evacuation medics and security forces defenders to execute Operation Allies Refuge.

“The 446th Operations Group has a legacy of supporting history-making operations, and this is no exception,” said Lt. Col. Cynthia Welch, commander of the 446th Operations Group who leads the wing’s aircrew and aeromedical evacuation personnel. “The men and women of the 446th Operations Group take pride in delivering hope to those in need.”

Among the Reserve Citizen Airmen from Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia,

who participated in the evacuation operation were aerial porters from the 80th Aerial Port Squadron.

These Reserve Citizen Airmen are part of a team capable of performing every aerial port function needed to deploy units and ensure cargo is ready to fly at short notice, said Chief Master Sgt. Luis Agredo, 80th APS superintendent.

“I couldn’t be more proud of our Airmen,” said Brig. Gen. Craig McPike, 94th Airlift Wing commander. “An airlift operation of this scale needs the Reserve component. It can only be done with the Total Force.”

“Nearly 60% of our mobility capacity resides in the Air Reserve Component, underscoring the importance of a Total Force approach,” said Col. Mark Villacis, chief of AFRC’s Mobility Operations Division. “An airlift operation of this historic magnitude can only be executed with Total Force integration. The partnership between the regular Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve is key to lifesaving



*Lt. Col. Shannon Walker, a Reserve Citizen Airman assigned to Joint Task Force-Crisis Response, high fives a child after helping her reunite with her family at Hamid Karzai International Airport. Hundreds of Reserve Citizen Airmen assisted the Department of State with the non-combatant evacuation operations in Afghanistan. (Marine Cpl. Davis Harris)*





Senior Airman Elijah Turner, 911th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, signals the aircrew in a C-17 to stop on the flight line at Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania, Aug. 31. The parking of the aircraft signaled the end of the evacuation efforts in Afghanistan for members of the 911th Airlift Wing. (Joshua J. Seybert)

non-combatant evacuation operations under extreme conditions we experienced in Kabul, Afghanistan.”

In all, more than 120,000 American citizens, civilian allies, Afghan special immigrant visa applicants and other vulnerable Afghans were taken out of harm’s way between Aug.15 and Aug. 31, all without a major aircraft mishap or accident.

As Operation Allies Refuge ended in August, Reserve Citizen Airmen answered the call to support Operation Allies Welcome, the Department of Homeland Security-led effort to support vulnerable Afghans, including those who worked alongside Americans in Afghanistan for the past two decades, as they safely resettled in the United States.

Reservists supported Operation Allies Welcome activities at locations across the country, including Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey; Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico; Dulles International Airport, Virginia; Philadelphia International Airport, Pennsylvania; and others.

At the Philadelphia airport, Maj. Mickael Lewis served as the 439th Contingency Response Element commander. As of Sept. 13, 63 of the 87

people working at the CRE were from the Air Reserve Component.

“We’re responsible for manifesting Afghan guests, unloading, loading and handling military aircraft, providing 24/7 command and control functions, and coordinating with more than 20 military and civilian agencies, including the Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau

of Investigation and the Transportation Security Administration to ensure a seamless process,” Lewis said.

“To date, we’ve operated military and commercial flights, welcomed Afghan guests into the United States, and transported many on outbound military flights to various locations around the U.S. The ARC Airmen here are phenomenal. They are truly multi-capable Airmen who, from day one, have acted outside their typical Air Force Specialty Code and have thrived.

“We have Reserve Airmen on the flight line working new aircraft, manifesting Afghan guests, leading teams in separate locations around the Philadelphia area, and professionally interacting with government agencies they’ve never dealt with before. We have Airmen loading aircraft, ramp aerial porters and maintainers manifesting passengers, and command post controllers providing command and control with several airport agencies. It’s truly remarkable to see Reserve Airmen from 14 different units come together and complete this extraordinary mission.”

#ReserveReady ■



Afghan passengers board a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III during the Afghanistan evacuation at Hamid Karzai International Airport, Afghanistan, Aug. 22.



A newborn baby is tended to on board a C-17 at a Middle East staging area. A 315th Airlift Wing aircrew from Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, helped deliver the baby. (Courtesy photo)

# Reservists help deliver babies on board Operation Allies Refuge flights

By Capt. Christina Judd

Two separate Air Force Reserve Command airlift wings successfully evacuated hundreds of Americans and allies during the early days of the Afghanistan evacuation operation ... and each landed with one more passenger than was manifested.

The 315th Airlift Wing from Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, and the 445th AW from Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, were both mobilized in support of Operation Allies Refuge alongside other U.S. and allied military organizations after the fall of Kabul Aug. 15.

On Aug. 23, a Reserve crew from the 315th AW’s 701st Airlift Squadron was waiting to land its C-17 Globemaster III at a Middle East staging area when crew members became concerned about a female passenger.

Tech. Sgt. Leah Schmidt, 701st AS loadmaster, and Capt. Leslie Green, 375th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron

flight nurse, used their professional Air Force training to help deliver a baby girl. Green said it was her first full delivery, but it wasn’t as hard as she expected.

“The hard part, she did by herself,” Green said of the Afghan woman whose healthy daughter arrived minutes before landing. “The baby was perfect. She was a little bit small, definitely didn’t make it to full term, but she came out crying. She seemed to be doing well in this world.”

A couple of days prior, on Aug. 21, another baby girl was born in the cargo bay of a 445th AW C-17 on its way from Qatar to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, while a group of female evacuees held up their shawls to protect the Afghan mother’s privacy. The baby girl’s parents named their daughter “Reach,” after the aircraft’s call sign (Reach 828).

Reach 828 had departed from an intermediate staging area in Qatar with a planeload of evacuees when the Afghan

mother went into labor and began having complications.

“The aircraft commander decided to descend in altitude to increase air pressure in the aircraft, which helped stabilize and save the mother’s life,” Air Mobility Command said via Twitter.

“So that child’s name will forever be Reach,” Gen. Tod Wolters, U.S. European Command commander, said during a news briefing Aug. 25. “And as you can well imagine, being an Air Force fighter pilot, it’s my dream to watch that young child called Reach grow up and be a U.S. citizen and fly United States Air Force fighters in our Air Force.” #ReserveReady

(Judd was temporarily assigned to the Headquarters AFRC public affairs office when she wrote this article.) ■



# Meet our 2021 Outstanding Airman of the Year

## Reservist shines as an example of Air Force core values

Story by Tech. Sgt. Courtney Richardson,  
Photos by Staff Sgt. Blake Gonzalez

Staff Sgt. Kristy Riley, the combat plans training supervisor for the 924th Maintenance Squadron's Munitions Flight, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, didn't join the Air Force Reserve to win awards. But, the honors sure are piling up.

After being named Air Force Reserve Command's Airman of the Year for 2021, Riley was recently named one of the Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year.

Originally from Escondido, California, Riley joined the Reserve in 2016 to help pay for her education as she pursued a degree in nursing.

While she said she entered the munitions career field because the "basic training and technical school dates just lined up perfectly," she immediately took to her military assignment.

"Munitions is an integral part of the Air Force mission," she said. "The pilots need their bombs, missiles and gun ammunition to be able to carry out their orders. Those defending the base

need their ammo for their firearms, and so on."

From the moment Riley arrived at the 924th Fighter Group, she hit the ground running, and her leadership immediately took notice.

"She outworks all her peers, and has continuously done so since joining our team five years ago," said Senior Master Sgt. James Pumarejo, 924th Maintenance Squadron munitions flight chief. "She is ambitious to reach her full potential. However, she is not willing to do it at the expense of another. She wants to see her teammates succeed every bit as much as herself.

"She is about getting stuff done, and finding the most efficient way to get it done. In our TFI (Total Force Integration) environment, I've had active-duty section superintendents fighting to have her in their shop. She's that good."

Riley's character traits have not wavered from the first day she put on her uniform.

"Believe it or not, Riley was a candidate for the wing's

annual awards three times in the five years she's been on our team," Pumarejo said. "This just goes to show she's always been consistent with her work ethic and drive. Each year, she would get a little bit larger scope of responsibility, and has always had the whole-Airman area squared away, constantly taking classes, volunteering and taking on responsibility above her grade."

The running theme in Riley's award nomination was her ability to streamline processes, train Airmen and support other organizations, all while saving the Air Force millions of dollars. Even while exceeding her leadership's expectations in the work place, Riley also completed college classes, and earned her cardiopulmonary resuscitation instructor and national emergency medical technician certifications.

She used her medical training while temporarily assigned to Nellis AFB in Nevada.

"We went to Lake Mead for a morale event," Riley said. "There was a disturbance in the water that turned out to be a man drowning. Some others and I were able to bring him and his cousin back to shore safely, where I assisted the paramedic in getting information from the man's wife and helping with anything the medic needed. The ambulance assigned to the lake was on another call, so it took a little bit of time to get the man on his way to the hospital. It was a case of 'right place at the right time,' and I was glad it ended well for him and his family."

Chief Master Sgt. Henry May, 924th FG superintendent, said Riley is constantly recognized for her performance, attitude and humility.

"Riley gives her all, every day," he said. "She has a pattern of consistent performance, which is evidenced by several previous award wins, such as the Pitsenbarger Award, three AFRC Outstanding Munitions/Missile Maintenance Awards, Air Combat Command Unit Effectiveness Inspection Superior Performer, and many others.

"She is not only driven in her own right, but pushes others

*Riley serves as the combat plans training supervisor for the 924th Maintenance Squadron's Munitions Flight, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona.*



*Riley, shown here demonstrating proper CPR techniques, is currently a full-time student pursuing her bachelor of science degree in nursing.*

to succeed as well. She has an infectious positive attitude, and constantly encourages her fellow Airmen. She simply lives the Air Force core values, and is genuinely committed to integrity, service and excellence."

Even though they were proud to nominate Riley for the award, no one expected her – a Reserve ammo troop – to win at the headquarters Air Force level.

"Airman of the Year is one of the most prestigious honors anyone can receive in their lifetime," May said. "Though I did not expect this to happen for our organization, I am honestly not surprised that it was Staff Sgt. Kristy Riley who was selected. She is simply an amazing Airman and a shining example of what every Airman should model their service after. Once I received the news that she had won, it took a few moments to sink in. Then, I felt an enormous swell of pride."

Riley is still surprised that she was named one of the Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year, but she has no plans to let the limelight deter her from her ultimate goals.

"I didn't join the military for recognition, and, honestly, never thought anything like this would happen," she said. "So, it's pretty amazing to say the least. To join originally as a way to serve, but also progress in my personal goals, and then to win an award at the Air Force level is almost unbelievable. This recognition as Airman of the Year for the Air Force is a humbling experience, and I am honored to represent the 70,000 Air Force Reservists who strive to defend our great nation. From here, I plan to finish my current enlistment next fall and then pursue becoming a nurse in the military to continue to serve in the area I feel called to."

Riley is currently a full-time student pursuing her bachelor of science degree in nursing at Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, Arizona. #ReserveResilient

*(Richardson is assigned to the 944th Fighter Wing's public affairs office.)*



*Staff Sgt. Kristy Riley was recently named one of the Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year for 2021.*





# Helping Hand



## Little Rock Reserve maintainers assist Keesler with WC-130J repair

By Lt. Col. Marnee A. C. Losurdo

When the 403rd Wing, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, needed some extra help to repair one of its WC-130J Super Hercules aircraft damaged in a fire, it reached out to a sister Reserve wing for assistance.

On Nov. 1, 2020, a 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron crew was preparing to take off to fly a Hurricane Eta mission when the aircraft's left wing caught fire. None of the crew were harmed, but the fire, which started in the wing, above the aircraft's auxiliary power unit, left a basketball-sized hole in the wing.

Soon after, Tech. Sgt. Brandon Oliver and Tech. Sgt. Dani Enderby, 913th Maintenance Squadron electrical and environmental technicians at Little Rock

Air Force Base, Arkansas, got a call from the 403rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron asking for their assistance.

"We were in need of manning; we have Air Reserve Technician vacancies, and we were supporting a deployment," said Senior Master Sgt. Steven Stafford, 403rd AMXS specialist flight chief. "In addition to that, we are training new Airmen who have lower experience levels. This repair was difficult, a major overhaul, so it had to be an experienced technician to handle the task."

When Oliver and Enderby got to Keesler earlier this year, they began troubleshooting.

"The APU wiring caught fire in the upper wing root and then melted through the aluminum support tubing

and destroyed the electrical system. Everything needed to be replaced," said Oliver, a traditional Reservist with eight years of experience at Little Rock. He is an E&E technician for a civilian company in Arkansas, and said that was one of reasons his leadership and the 403rd AMXS asked for his help.

E&E technicians maintain and repair the wiring and electrical components on an aircraft, ranging from cabin pressurization to wiring for engine control.

"We touch everything on the aircraft electronically controlled – all moving parts that have electricity going to them and anything that supplies power, like generators and inverters," he said. "We maintain and repair any issues with the environmental side as well, such as the liquid oxygen, which is life support equipment."

By having the 913th maintainers at

Keesler, it allowed the 403rd AMXS to have a dedicated electrician team to work on the aircraft, said Col. Steven Fortson, 403rd Maintenance Group commander.

"They had to rewire a whole leading edge down to an APU into the landing gear," he said. "That's a huge task and manpower power bill, and because they were down here we didn't have to take that extra manpower out of hide. If we didn't have them here, we'd still probably be working on it."

It took the crew of E&E technicians, along with 403rd AMXS dedicated crew chiefs and personnel from the 403rd Fabrications Flight, about 820 man hours to make all the repairs to the wing.

The repaired plane flew its first flight July 13.

"We fixed all the damage and all the operational checks have passed," said Oliver.

The 403rd's relationship with the

913th isn't anything new. The 913th MXS is a unit in the 913th Airlift Group, a classic associate unit to the active duty's 19th Airlift Wing at Little Rock. The two units, one active and the other Reserve, use the Total Force concept of integration where the 19th AW is the host and has primary responsibility for the C-130J aircraft the units fly and maintain.

For newer maintenance members who are undergoing upgrade training, it can be a challenge to get signed off on certain tasks, said Oliver, so maintenance members from the 913th AMXS have been coming to Keesler for the past few years to obtain additional proficiency training.

Oliver's first trip to Keesler was in 2017, and groups of maintainers from the 913th assisted the 403rd MXG periodically, to include helping out with the 2020 hurricane season, the 2021 atmospheric river missions and the

current hurricane season.

"It's a change of pace for us, especially not having our own aircraft," said Oliver. "We work hand-in-hand with active duty at Little Rock on drill weekends, but coming here for annual tour is good for our traditional Reservists to get additional experience and training. It's a great sense of fulfillment and completion to be able to come here and assist the unit with fixing this aircraft, and that makes it all worth it."

The relationship the 403rd Wing has with the 913th Airlift Group is very beneficial, said Fortson.

"They get the training they need and we get additional manning and a broader pool of maintenance Air Force Specialties to pull from. It's win-win for everybody," he said. #ReserveReady

(Losurdo is assigned to the 403rd Wing's public affairs office.)

Tech. Sgt. Dani Enderby, left, and Tech. Sgt. Brandon Oliver, 913th Maintenance Squadron electrical and environmental technicians, work on a WC-130J Super Hercules aircraft at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. E&E technicians maintain and repair the wiring and electrical components on an aircraft. (Staff Sgt. Shelton Sherrill)



A WC-130J Super Hercules aircraft assigned to the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron at Keesler, takes off for its functional check flight in July. The aircraft took off after months of extensive repairs after a fire left a basketball-sized hole in one of its wings. (2nd Lt. Christopher Carranza)





# Behind the Scenes

Ops Support  
Reservists ensure  
helmets work  
properly



*Tech. Sgt. Anthony Farnsworth, 419th Operations Support Squadron, adjusts an F-35 helmet during optical fit training at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. Each helmet is inspected every 105 days and has a 120-day fit check to ensure its functionality and safety. Top right, Farnsworth demonstrates the F-35 Generation III Helmet-Mounted Display*

*Staff Sgt. AJ Arteaga adjusts Farnsworth's head position during F-35 helmet optical fit training.*

Reserve Citizen Airmen in the 419th Operations Support Squadron, Hill Air Force Base, Utah, play a crucial role to ensure the safety of pilots assigned to the 419th Fighter Wing, the Air Force Reserve's only combat-capable F-35 unit.

"We are responsible for maintaining and repairing pilot gear to ensure everything is in proper working condition," said Staff Sgt. AJ Arteaga, aircrew flight equipment Reservist with the 419th OSS. "That includes their helmet."

Every helmet is custom-fitted to its pilot during a two-day process at a fit facility. To begin assembly of the helmet, pilots have their heads measured and scanned to secure the perfect fit.

Once assembled, pilots need to have the optics aligned using a pupilometer, which measures the distance between their pupils within two millimeters of its center, so pilots see a single image on the helmet-mounted display.

On the display, pilots are able to view mission-critical information and obtain enhanced situational awareness of the battlefield simply by moving their head. The helmet gives pilots a 360-degree view of the F-35's external environment without needing to tip the jet.

"The pilot can look down through a portion of their wing and see what's below," said Tech. Sgt. William Vass, 419th OSS. "When they look toward the cameras embedded on the F-35, that image projects onto their helmet display."

The helmet's innovative technology and precise fit require routine maintenance so pilots can complete their mission. In addition to pre- and post-flight fittings, the helmet is inspected every 105 days and has a 120-day fit check to ensure its functionality and safety.

"Pilots come in and put on all their gear so we can double-check to make sure everything fits properly and without issue," Arteaga said. "Small things such as a new haircut or a couple of pounds gained could cause the helmet to not fit correctly."

Mask adjustments are also included within the helmet fitting. Pilots are sent to an oxygen tester where aircrew flight equipment technicians can identify any leaks around the mask that could prevent adequate oxygen flow.

"The next part is to ensure there is a proper distance between the mask and the visor," Arteaga said. "We have to make sure when the pilot moves or talks, the mask doesn't hit the visor. If it's too close, it will bend the visor and distort the display image."

Reservists in the AFE shop are an integral part of the helmet fitting process and maintenance intervals. They verify it remains as precise as possible to guarantee the safety of the 27 pilots in the 419th FW. The work is involved and in-depth, but essential to providing a seamless interaction between the helmets' advanced capabilities and the exacting skills of the pilot wearing it. *#ReserveReady (Webster is assigned to the 419th Fighter Wing's public affairs office.)*

Story and photos by Senior Airman  
Erica Webster







Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 908th Airlift Wing, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, participate in the cardio portion of the Air Force Physical Fitness Assessment in July. Under the new assessment, scheduled to begin in early 2022, Airmen will get to select from the traditional 1.5-mile run, 1-mile walk or the High Aerobic Multi-shuttle Run to meet the cardio requirement.

# New Fitness Assessment

## Reserve's exercise physiologists help shape latest program

Story by Bo Joyner  
Photos by Staff Sgt. Max Goldberg

Air Force Reserve Command's Fitness and Health Promotion functional manager and his team of 10 exercise physiologists played a prominent role in bringing about the latest major changes to the Air Force's fitness assessment program.

The Air Force announced in July that the service will now provide Airmen five physical fitness assessment alternatives – three for the cardio portion and sit-up components and two for the push-up component of the physical fitness assessment beginning in early 2022.

As the lead exercise scientist for the Air Force's Tier 1 Fitness Program Revision Task Force, AFRC's Jason Ham has been at the forefront of the Air Force's efforts to move away from a one-size-fits-all fitness assessment model.

"The most recent Air Force Fitness Program Working Group charter

was signed in early 2020," Ham said. "However, the charter has existed off and on for years. I've actually been on the working group for more than 25 years as a major command or Air Staff functional subject matter expert for exercise physiology."

In addition to Ham, all 10 of AFRC's exercise physiologists – assigned to each of the command's host units – served on the working group and provided key research and data analysis during the quest to find new assessment alternatives.

Under the new assessment model, Airmen will select from the traditional 1.5-mile run, 1-mile walk or the High Aerobic Multi-shuttle Run (20M HAMR) to meet the cardio requirement.

They will then select from traditional push-ups or hand release push-ups for one strength component; and from sit-ups, the cross-leg reverse crunch or

plank for the other strength component to complete the comprehensive fitness assessment.

Ham said he is confident the new assessment will more accurately test and measure an Airman's fitness.

"I am very excited with the research and development done to create the five new alternate components," he said. "I feel the task force covered many areas that were missing in the 2004-present assessment to include addressing agility, balance and coordination. The new assessments will also reduce injury risk and address total body strength.

"Initial feedback from field and beta testing show that our Airmen are very happy with the new assessments and the ability to choose what assessments they want to take the day of the test. Ultimately, the task force wanted to give the fitness assessment back to our Airmen and empower them to have a healthy relationship with their fitness."

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. CQ Brown, Jr. said he is excited about the new fitness assessment alternatives.

"More testing options will put flexibility in the hands of our Airmen – where it belongs," he said in an Air Force news story. "We know not all Airmen maintain their fitness the same way and may excel in different areas. Alternate components provide choices while still providing a mechanism to determine overall fitness."

Ham said the time was right to thoroughly review the Air Force's fitness assessment program and make updates.

"This is the first significant change to the program since 2004, when we moved away from cycle ergometry," he said. "Feedback from the Airmen in the field was that the fitness assessment program was in need of a comprehensive review to ensure that the Air Force is executing a 21<sup>st</sup> century assessment program with the most current science to support it."

He went on to say that the new assessment alternatives should be good news for Reserve Citizen Airmen.

"Feedback from the Reserve during the initial test phase of the new fitness assessments was very positive," he said. "I

do believe scheduling multiple assessment options on a unit training assembly will present a challenge. However, the task force is working to update the fitness data base, myFitness, to allow for easier scheduling tools."

myFitness will eventually allow users to schedule fitness assessments, receive automated notifications for scheduled testing or cancellations, access and submit fitness assessments, and upload medical documents for review.

myFitness is hosted on the myFSS platform and is a part of the Air Force's initiative to improve Airmen and Guardian experience with technology by making applications user friendly and more easily accessible. Active duty, Guard and Reserve personnel will be able to access and use myFitness worldwide.

To access myFitness, go to <https://myfss.us.af.mil>.

For additional information on physical fitness, Airmen can visit myPers or the Air Force Personnel Center's fitness program page. Draft fitness score charts are available on myPers to use until final score charts are provided.

Ham said the working group could not have accomplished what it did without the expertise of AFRC's exercise physiologists.

"I would like to recognize the incredible work accomplished by our host installation exercise physiologists for all the time and dedication spent developing this program in an accelerated environment," Ham said. "When the call came from the Air Force, we answered. It is certainly not every day that AFRC leads a Total Force revision impacting more than 755,000 Airmen globally. I am privileged to say that I stand on the shoulders of giants every day and get to work with the Air Force's finest exercise scientists, medical professionals and policy teams." #ReserveReady #ReserveReform ■

*Under the new assessment, Airmen will get to select from sit-ups, the cross-leg reverse crunch or plank. They will also get to select from traditional push-ups or hand release push-ups for the strength components.*

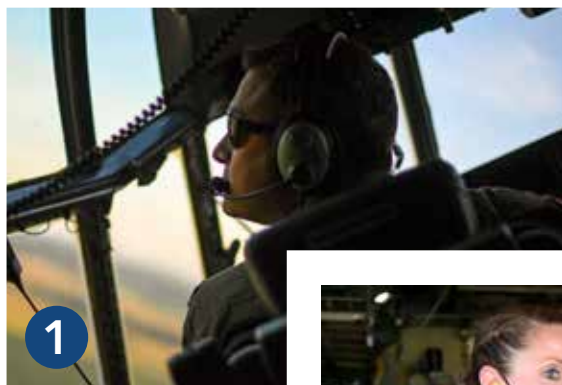




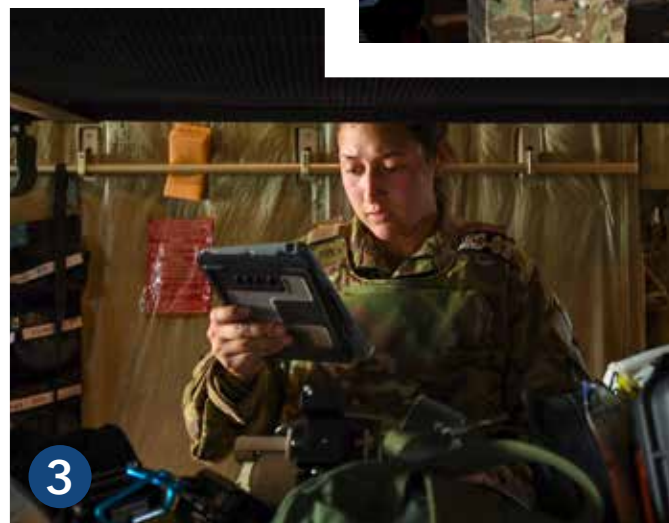


# Patriot Warrior 2021

Reservists  
accelerate  
readiness at  
premier  
AFRC exercise



*Patriot Warrior is Air Force Reserve Command's premier exercise, providing Airmen an opportunity to train with joint and international partners in airlift, aeromedical evacuation and mobility support. The exercise builds on capabilities for the future fight, increasing the readiness, lethality and agility of the Air Force Reserve. Here are a few images from this year's exercise in August. 1. Maj. Aaron Sanchez, 403rd Wing, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, flies a C-130J. (Tech. Sgt. Corban Lundborg) 2. A maintainer inspects a C-130J Super Hercules prior to aerial operations (Tech. Sgt. Corban Lundborg) 3. Senior Airman Arielle Maes, an aeromedical evacuation technician with the 34th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Peterson AFB, Colorado, prepares medical equipment during aeromedical evacuation training. (Tech. Sgt. Corban Lundborg)*



*4. Reserve Citizen Airmen arrive at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, for the two week training exercise. (Staff Sgt. Shelton Sherrill) 5. Aeromedical evacuation Airmen load a litter-bound patient onto a C-130 aircraft for evacuation at Sparta Airfield at Fort McCoy. (Tech. Sgt. Lauren M. Snyder) 6. Airmen offload a C-130J Super Hercules aircraft assigned to the 815th Airlift Squadron, Keesler AFB, for aeromedical evacuation training (Tech. Sgt. Corban Lundborg) 7. Master Sgt. Carla Thornton, 556th Red Horse Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Florida, receives M4 rifle familiarization training. (Staff Sgt. Shelton Sherrill) 8. Staff Sgt. Laura Artega, a flight medical technician with the 934th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minnesota, prepares for patient loading (Staff. Sgt. Alexis Suarez) #ReserveReady*



# Accelerating Readiness in the Pacific

Story by Tech. Sgt. Tricia Topasna, Photos by James Bowman

## Reservists sharpen their skills during inaugural exercise in Hawaii



1. Lt. Col. Rudolph Bartley, 624th Civil Engineer Squadron commander, briefs Reserve Citizen Airmen on teamwork, safety and a positive attitude during Pacific Warriorz 2021. 2. Senior Master Sgt. Andrew Whitelaw briefs Lt. Col. Anjanette Lowe and Chief Master Sgt. James Kenwolf, 48th Aerial Port Squadron, on the different locations APS personnel will be located during the exercise. 3. 1st Lt. Rylyn Kinoshita and Staff Sgt. Ebony Davis, 624th Regional Support Group Reserve Citizen Airmen, train on medical scenarios in the blood lab during Pacific Warriorz 2021. The blood lab allows technicians to treat injuries with fake blood, loud sounds and fog, simulating a combat environment.



4. Staff Sgt. Veleeca Conley signs for chemical gear that was issued to her by Airman 1st Class Darlene Ibarra. Both Conley and Ibarra are Reserve Citizen Airmen assigned to the 624th Regional Support Group. 5. Tech Sgt. Joshua Hayworth, 624th Civil Engineer Squadron, is part of a four-person team carrying a litter during the exercise. 6. Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 624th Regional Support Group train on medical scenarios in the blood lab.

More than 300 Reserve Citizen Airmen teamed with their Guard and active-duty counterparts to sharpen their skills during the inaugural Pacific Warriorz exercise at Schofield Barracks in Oahu, Hawaii, this summer. Reservists from the 624th Regional Support Group, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, participated in PWZ-21 and conducted their own local readiness exercise in June. The readiness

exercise tested the group's ability to deploy and employ its Airmen. PWZ-21 provided vital readiness training in the areas of tactical combat casualty care, land navigation, troop leading procedures, convoy operations, radio usage/etiquette, base defense and casualty evacuation loading procedures, among other skills. "We all came together to create this opportunity to get in front and teach our skills," said Capt. John Penaranda, 624th

Civil Engineer Squadron Readiness Flight commander. "Going forward, we want our teams to know they can rely on their fellow Airmen from across the 624th RSG. Regardless of their AFSC, when our Airmen meet on a contingency operation, they should be able to say 'I trained alongside you during PWZ-21. I know your strengths and can count on you.' Ultimately, we want to create a team of resilient, multi-capable Airmen who

can operate independently to generate missions and project power." The PWZ exercise tested the group's ability to train and implement the war-fighting concepts of Agile Combat Employment and Multi-Capable Airmen while working in an austere environment. Agile Combat Employment challenges Airmen in smaller groups to establish base operations under extreme conditions quickly and efficiently. From putting

boots on the ground to evacuating on short notice, the training provided Airmen skills and abilities that crossed standard job lanes, increasing survivability and adaptability in contingency operations. "PWZ-21 presented many challenges and unforeseen variables," said Master Sgt. Darren Clemen, 624th CES. "In typical Air Force fashion, the Airmen were quick to adapt and generate

solutions which ultimately led to a very successful event. These types of training events are tremendous in preparing our Airmen and building those relationships across our Total Force. I am looking forward to PWZ-22." #ReserveReady (Topasna and Bowman are assigned to the 624th Regional Support Group's public affairs office.)



# Diversity and Inclusion

## Reservist helping lead barrier analysis working group for LGBTQ members

By Bo Joyner



*Senior Master Sgt. David Smith is an individual mobilization augmentee currently serving as the co-chair of the Air Force's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning Initiative Team. (Courtesy photo)*

A Reserve Citizen Airman is helping lead a new Air Force team charged with identifying and resolving the issues that disproportionately impede the success of LGBTQ Airmen and Guardians.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning Initiative Team (LIT) was officially formed in March 2021 under the umbrella of the Department of the Air Force's Barrier Analysis Working Group to find and eliminate barriers in both the Air Force and Space Force.

When Senior Master Sgt. David Smith, an individual mobilization augmentee currently assigned to Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, first heard about the LIT late in 2020, he knew he wanted to be a part. Smith serves as the LIT's co-chair, along with Col.

Shannon Phares, the deputy command surgeon for U.S. Africa Command.

"I want to make a difference, and feel like I can with this amazing team," Smith said. "We are committed to identifying and addressing those gaps that continue to affect our LGBTQ personnel and their families."

Phares said the LIT is extremely fortunate to have Smith as its co-chair.

"Senior Master Sgt. Smith is a leader who truly cares about the LGBTQ community and works hard for our team," Phares said. "He has had his own challenges as a gay man, and his resilience to overcome is something that so many need to hear and can relate to in this organization. His personality, humor and passion for what we are trying to accomplish just sets the tone for the LIT. It's a true pleasure to work with him as a co-chair."

Smith first joined the Air Force in 2000, and served on active duty for 10 years. As a Reserve Citizen Airman for the past 11 years, he served as both a traditional Reservist and on Active Guard and Reserve tours before recently transitioning to the IMA world. With his experience on active duty and across the Reserve spectrum, he brings a diverse military perspective to the LIT.

As a divorced father of four who has been married to his husband, Gabriel, for a little over a year, he also brings a unique personal perspective to the team.

"My wife and I divorced in 2014, and that was a time in my life when I really hit rock bottom," he said. "I struggled for a few years following the divorce to find myself and determined to be open-minded and accept a life that may have been different to that of what I was used to or was supposed to live. I kept my personal life a secret during this time. It wasn't until 2017 that I started being OK with who I was. My life and career really turned around for the better when I decided I was going to be transparent and vulnerable with people. A lot of people in our community are like that. It takes a long time for some people to come out, and you have to give them that grace."

Smith said he has heard a lot of stories similar to his own during his time with the LIT.

"Our main goal is to listen to the Airmen, hear their stories and find out where they are facing barriers, and try to bring a resolution," he said. "That can be something as simple as using



*Smith and his husband, Gabriel, have been married for a little more than a year. (Courtesy photo)*

pronouns in signature blocks all the way to fertility issues for same sex couples and barriers facing our transgender Airmen."

The senior NCO said the Air Force has come a long way in allowing LGBTQ members to openly serve, but there is still a long way to go to remove the barriers many LGBTQ members face.

"The fact that we have the LIT is proof that things are getting better," he said. "I think it's great that the Air Force is the first service to have a group like the LIT and is serious about identifying and removing the barriers Airmen in our community continue to face. As we mark 10 years since the repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,' I'm super excited with what the Air Force is doing to break down these barriers and I'm excited to be a part of it."

On Dec. 20, 2010, President Barack Obama signed legislation that led to the repeal of DADT, which for nearly two decades blocked openly gay personnel from serving in the military. The policy formally ended in September 2011.

The Department of the Air Force created the Barrier Analysis Working Group in 2008 to analyze data, trends and barriers to service for the civilian workforce. Since then, the focus has broadened to include military personnel.

In addition to the LIT, the BAWG includes these teams: the Black/African American Employment Strategy Team, the Disability Action Team, the Hispanic Empowerment and Action Team, the Indigenous Nations Equality Team, the Pacific Islander/Asian American Community Team and the Women's Initiatives Team.

Airmen or Guardians interested in getting involved with the Barrier Analysis Working Group or any of its teams should contact SAF/ODI at [SAF.ODI.Workflow@us.af.mil](mailto:SAF.ODI.Workflow@us.af.mil).   
#ReserveResilient #ReserveReform

## Reservists must be fully COVID-19 vaccinated this year

AFRC Public Affairs



The Air Force has directed that all Reserve Citizen Airmen in part-time statuses be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by Dec. 2, 2021, and all Reservists on active duty or in Active Guard and Reserve status be fully vaccinated by Nov. 2, 2021.

Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall directed the COVID-19 vaccine implementation guidelines in accordance with the Secretary of Defense mandate announced in August.

"As a key factor in our readiness and war fighting mission, the health and wellbeing of our Reserve Citizen Airmen is of the utmost importance to me, my staff and our nation's defense," Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee, Air Force Reserve Command commander and chief of the Air Force Reserve, said in his commander's intent shortly after the order was issued.

"In accordance with Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall's guidelines for the COVID-19 vaccine, I now intend for all our military Reserve Citizen Airmen to be fully vaccinated by Dec. 2, 2021. Our medical personnel are equipped with the approved Pfizer vaccine to administer to our Airmen during the next unit training assembly weekend."

Scobee said he expects all Reserve Citizen Airmen to fall into one of four categories to ensure the command meets the Dec. 2 deadline: fully vaccinated; actively getting fully vaccinated; in receipt of an approved exemption or have an eligible exemption in progress; or declining the vaccination, which is incompatible with continued military service.

"I believe most of you will be in the first two categories, and we will continue to fly, fight and win whenever our nation needs us," he said.

Many Air Force Reserve members across the command received their vaccine during September's UTA, and many units will continue to vaccinate in the coming weeks.

As of publication, the current COVID-19 vaccine mandate only applies to active duty, Guard and Reserve Airmen, and does not apply to federal civil service employees. Federal civil service employee requirements will be addressed at a later date in a separate communication.

AFRC medical officials and senior leaders highly encourage everyone to help protect themselves and others by being vaccinated.

Service members are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after completing the second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine, or two weeks after receiving a single dose of a one-dose vaccine. For more information, Airmen are encouraged to work with their chains of command and local military treatment facilities.   
#ReserveReady



Reserve Citizen Airmen with the 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron and the 445th ASTS prepare to conduct aircraft familiarization and En-Route Patient Staging System training on a C-17 Globemaster III.

# Teaming Up

## Arizona medical Reservists train with their Ohio counterparts

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Matthew Bruch



Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, headed to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, for their annual tour to conduct joint medical training with the 445th ASTS in early August.

“We decided to build a training plan where the ASTS from Luke could come out to Wright-Patterson,” said Chief Master Sgt. Scott Luff, 445th ASTS chief enlisted manager. “We have

so many unique training opportunities here that aren’t available for them at Luke.”

Wright-Patterson AFB has the advantage of being close to large medical training facilities such as the Dayton Veterans Administration Hospital, the Wright-Patterson Medical Center and the Wright State University National Center for Medical Readiness, also known as “Calamityville.”



*Reservists from the 944th ASTS train members of the 445th ASTS in Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) at Wright State University's National Center for Medical Readiness.*

In addition to large medical training facilities on base and around the Dayton area, Wright-Patterson AFB is also home to the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron and the 89th Airlift Squadron, both units essential for an ASTS to receive comprehensive training and experience with the En-Route Patient Staging System mission.

“It is a huge benefit to our members to work with an ASTS who regularly trains in the ERPSS mission,” said Lt. Col. Kathleen Kent, 944th ASTS chief nurse.

To increase the level of realism, the unit trainers aligned their annual tour to coincide with the 455th AES, the 89th AS, which provided C-17 Globemaster III support, and the U.S.

*445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron members stabilize a simulated patient after having the patient transferred from the 944th ASTS at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. The 944th ASTS from Luke AFB, Arizona, aligned its annual training this year with the 445th ASTS to maximize training capabilities.*



Army Reserve 244th Aviation Combat Brigade, which provided HH-60M Black Hawk medevac support.

“It’s a multi-level, bang-for-your-buck level of training,” said Col. Bobbie Stemen, 445th ASTS commander.

All of these capabilities and resources available at Wright-Patterson AFB gave the participants access to practice receiving, stabilizing and transporting simulated patients between the Black Hawks and a C-17 Globemaster III.

“For many of the 944th personnel, this was the first opportunity to actually load simulated patients onto a cargo plane, to experience the noise of the flight line and the physical challenges that accompany this mission,” Kent said.

Kent went on to explain that this training was beneficial to her Airmen because they all play a part in the mission, but don’t always have the ability to train in environments other than Luke AFB.

“We have medical technicians, nurses, doctors, administrative personnel, dietary technicians, pharmacy technicians and biomed who all contribute to this part of the mission,” Kent said. “We deploy in a variety of settings, from very austere to locations with established medical treatment facilities across the globe.”

After the first week of training, more than 100 service members were put to the test in a culminating training event held at Calamityville.

Calamityville is a training, testing and research venue where military and civilian emergency first responders hone their



skills while building relationships. The training was designed to increase skills in caring for combat wounded in challenging remote locations where traditional medical evacuation may not be possible.

As simulated grenades and small arms fire rang out, the ASTS Airmen were placed in a stressful environment and tested on their response to a mass casualty situation.

“This is the most dynamic training I’ve ever attended, and I’ve been in EMS for 16 years,” said Airman 1st Class Nathan Blankenship, 944th ASTS aerospace medical technician. “The actors of the casualty, the real-world equipment, the austere environment are all making it actually how it would be in the real world.”

The 944th ASTS was not the only unit to benefit from the joint effort in this year’s training. With a cadre of certified instructors, the 944th ASTS was able to train and certify 19 members of the 445th ASTS in Tactical Combat Casualty Care while training at Calamityville.

“It’s a symbiotic relationship because we were able to do a lot of training here that the 944th normally doesn’t get,” Luff said.

*Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron perform a patient transfer from a U.S. Army Reserve HH-60M Black Hawk medevac helicopter.*

“They’ve reciprocated by being able to do TCCC training for us. I don’t have TCCC instructors, so Master Sgt. [Justin] Sanderson and his cadre of instructors were able to train my people.”

As a successful first-time experiment, the future of cross-organizational training looks promising for these squadrons and those involved in Air Force Reserve aeromedical readiness.

“The joint training between our two squadrons in the future is going to constantly evolve,” Stemen said.

Over the course of the annual tour, the service members participated in Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape training, mass casualty scenarios, TCCC and an active shooter exercise with local police and SWAT. They also completed 67 computer-based trainings, 129 clinical training hours at the VA and Wright Patterson Medical Center, and closed out 20 individual medical readiness requirements. #ReserveReady  
(Bruch is assigned to the 944th Fighter Wing’s public affairs office.)

# Play Ball!

## IMA is first Academy grad to play Major League Baseball



By Tech. Sgt. Tara R. Abrahams

Capt. Griffin Jax put his baseball dream on hold when he joined the Air Force, but the flexibility of being an Individual Mobilization Augmentee has allowed him to take the mound again ... this time for a Major League Baseball team.

Jax made United States Air Force Academy history earlier this summer as the first cadet to play at the MLB level. He made his debut June 5.

Now his year is split between two unique careers. During the baseball season, Jax pitches for the Minnesota Twins. In the off-season, he switches to his military position. As an Air Force IMA supporting the U.S. Space Force, Jax is assigned to the Digital Analysis and Assessments Division and works as the IMA to the chief of the Resources Branch in Space Operations Command.

Baseball has been a part of Jax’s life since he was five years old. He played other sports as a child, but he said baseball was his favorite.

“I can definitely see how it catches a lot of heat from people for being kind of slow, but I always really enjoyed the subtle intricacies of it,” he said.

By middle school, he was thinking about playing professionally. In high school, he saw himself as “middle of the pack,” but some MLB teams saw potential. The Philadelphia Phillies offered him a spot in their organization, but Jax turned it down.

“I didn’t have aspirations to sign straight out of high school,” he said. “I wanted to go to college first.”



*Then-Cadet Griffin Jax, left, stands with his brothers, Cadets Carson and Parker Jax, during his senior year at the Air Force Academy in 2017. (Courtesy photo)*



*Capt. Griffin Jax hugs his wife, Savannah, at his Major League Baseball debut in June. An Individual Mobilization Augmentee, Jax is the first Air Force Academy graduate to play for an MLB team (Courtesy photo)*

Jax decided to go to the Academy. Although he said he was excited to play for a Division 1 team, his main focus was on earning his education.

“I knew going to the Air Force Academy would set me up for some pretty cool life opportunities and experiences I wouldn’t find anywhere else,” he said.

In 2016, Jax’s junior year, he was drafted by the Twins and made an agreement with the school. He was to play ball for the summer, finish his senior year and then return to the team. But a month or so prior to graduation, he was told he needed to complete his active-duty commitment first.

“When I graduated in May of 2017, I thought baseball was going to be put on the backburner,” he said. “I went into my first duty assignment with the understanding that I wouldn’t be able to play for roughly two years.”

Only six months into his position, he applied to the World Class Athlete program, an Air Force-sponsored program that allows Airmen to train for an Olympic sport. Since Jax fell into the 2020 Olympic window, he applied. After acceptance, he stopped his day-to-day job and started training again.

In the spring of 2019, Jax transferred to the Reserve using the Palace Chase program. He found an IMA position and started in November. Seven months later, he received the call from the Twins he’s been waiting for. It was official – time to play ball.

“When the season’s over, I have to shift gears and focus on something completely new,” the captain said. “I have something else to pursue and better myself at.”

Jax said he couldn’t have asked for a better unit to serve in, and HQ RIO, the organization that supports all the Air Force IMAs is excited he’s part of their team as well.

“Captain Jax is an excellent example of the flexibility inherent in the IMA program,” said Col. Jason Cashman, HQ RIO Detachment 3 commander. “Even with the demands placed on a professional athlete, he is able to continue to serve his country. Managing dual careers can be challenging at times, and I applaud his motivation to continue to support Space Operations Command and the Air Force Reserve.” #ReserveResilient  
(Abrahams is assigned to the HQ RIO public affairs office.)





# Element of Surprise

## Patrick Reservists tackle training during Hawaii field exercise

By Lt. Col. Ian Phillips



*A 920th Rescue Wing HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter flies near the Hawaiian coast during Exercise Distant Horizon in August. The 920th RQW established a forward operating base to conduct field-exercise Distant Horizon to validate tactics, techniques and procedures of personnel recovery and agile combat employment in the Indo-Pacific region.*



*Left, 920th Rescue Wing Airmen push an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter out from inside a 433rd Airlift Wing C-5 Galaxy aircraft after returning to Patrick Space Force Base, Florida, from Exercise Distant Horizon. (Master Sgt. Kelly Goonan) Below, a 920th Rescue Wing HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter receives air-to-air refuel from a 920th RQWHC-130J Combat King II aircraft during Exercise Distant Horizon.*



*920th Rescue Wing Aeromedical Staging Squadron Airmen triage simulated casualties during Exercise Distant Horizon.*

In a remote and desolate field at U.S. Army Garrison, Hawaii, 100 one-person tents seemed to appear out of nowhere as Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 920th Rescue Wing, Patrick Space Force Base, Florida, established a forward operating base to conduct a field exercise.

Called Distant Horizon, the event was designed to validate tactics, techniques and procedures of personnel recovery and agile combat employment in the Indo-Pacific region.

In less than 24 hours, 920th RQW personnel mobilized, maneuvered across 4,700 miles, established a forward operating base and postured to conduct rescue raid events as a self-sustained encampment for seven days. The Rescue Force - Light package is a combined arms team of ground and air combatants. The wing also projects heavy and medium packages designed for assaults on defended points of incident.

"For seven days, we validated a new force presentation model focused on rescue in contested maritime and jungle environments," said Col. John Dobbin, 920th RQW commander. "We succeeded at an autonomous operation that capitalized on speed, maneuver and unpredictability while we executed it halfway around the world from our point of origin."

Strategic airlift from the 433rd Airlift Wing at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, and the 436th Airlift Wing at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, conducted rapid transport of the rescue force to the remote island location that is part of the U.S. Army's 25th Infantry Division training area. The rescue force then self-deployed a further distance to its forward operating base.

At the exercise forward operating base and remote initial contingency locations, combatants focused on major combat operation scenarios encompassing kinetic applications in offense and defense for the rescue force and its encampment.

"Initial contingency locations keep us mobile and unpredictable," Dobbin said. "This projects our fighting power deeper in the battle space, and enables the rescue force to seize the combat tempo from an enemy."

Establishing a bare base in the middle of nowhere took coordination between every unit of the wing and select joint partners. Everyone was essential, from operational personnel to security and communications, but perhaps most important was the wing's Single Pallet Expeditionary Kitchen team, which fed the force with two hot meals a day, at times in a relentless physical environment.





920th Rescue Wing Airmen watch as an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter takes off during Exercise Distant Horizon.



920th Rescue Wing pararescuemen treat moulage wounds of simulated injured Airmen onboard an HC-130J Combat King II.

“People are operating beyond their AFSC and testing their thresholds in depravity, exhaustion and problem solving. Definitely out of their comfort zones and all to make us a more lethal fighting force,” said a rescue force senior enlisted leader.

Environmental conditions challenged all involved. Temperatures and strong wind gusts during the day increased demands on logistics and sustainment, providing an excellent opportunity to refine standard operating procedures of the combat sustainment team.

“The exercise allowed us to practice skills we have been developing over the last year with a combined arms team and validate our key tactics techniques and procedures. We were highly successful in validating these tactics, techniques and procedures,” said the rescue force commander.

Distant Horizon is an annual exercise that prepares the wing for priority requirements around the world. Vigilant readiness garnered through these exercises and others supports the wing’s mission to plan, lead and conduct military rescue operations and missions to deny competitors and adversaries exploitation of isolated personnel. #ReserveReady (Phillips is assigned to the 920th Rescue Wing’s public affairs office.) ■

# A Helping Heart

## Reserve Citizen Airman provides for children in need

By Senior Airman Kate Bragg



Most people don't share their toothbrush, not even with another family member.

But that exact situation is what spurred Tech. Sgt. Eric Porth to start a donation drive for children in low-income families in Shreveport and Bossier City, Louisiana.

Porth, a fuel systems craftsman with the 307th Bomb Wing's Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, recently spoke with a friend who works at a local community health center. What Porth learned from that conversation stunned him.

"There was a family of six, and they had one toothbrush for the entire family," he said. "Wow, you just think it's normal to have your own toothbrush."

Porth began learning more about the children. After a doctor's visit, he explained that they often go to a treasure chest box filled with fun goodies, like small toys. But the box also has personal hygiene products like deodorant, toothbrushes and soap.

"The kids always go for the hygiene products," Porth said. "They want their own products so they don't have to share with their family."

Porth quickly decided to create a donation drive for the children. He began to post fliers around his squadron, personally appealing for help from the Airmen.

He focused on collecting necessities children would need for the school year, such as backpacks, socks and underwear, in addition to personal hygiene items.

According to Porth, the drive was supposed to be only at the squadron level, but word got out, and it spread to the entire 307th Bomb Wing. Then, after a meeting with the active-duty 2nd Bomb Wing's first sergeants, it reached the whole base.

For Porth, the thought of a child suffering was all the motivation he needed to start the drive.

"I wasn't the richest kid growing up, but I always had my own toothbrush," he said. "It just hit me in the right way, and

I thought I can do something, so let's do it!"

Although this year's drive is over, Porth said he plans on making it an annual event to serve even more children in the area. #ReserveResilient

(Bragg is assigned to the 307th Bomb Wing public affairs office.) ■

Tech. Sgt. Eric Porth, a fuel systems craftsman assigned to the 307th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, organizes donations at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, in August. Porth spearheaded a supply drive for school children in Shreveport and Bossier City, Louisiana, after hearing about their needs from a friend with a local charity organization. (Senior Airman Kate Bragg)







*Qualified evacuees board a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III aircraft as part of Afghanistan evacuation operations at Hamid Karzai International Airport, Afghanistan, Aug. 21. For more on the Reserve's role in supporting Operations Allies Refuge and Allies Welcome, see the story on page 6. (Senior Airman Taylor Crul)*